

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
OF THE
LOFTUS URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year 1943, which has been prepared on the lines indicated in the Ministry of Health's Circulars No. 2773 and 10,44.

The vital statistics furnished for the year by the Registrar-General show the highest number of births since 1939, while the number of deaths is under the average of the war years. The infant mortality, at 47 infant deaths per thousand births, is below the average rate over the country as a whole.

Of the deaths during the year almost one-half (51%) occurred at the ages of 65 years or upwards, very much the same proportion as in the similar neighbouring districts of Guisborough and of Skelton and Brotton Urban Districts. In the Borough of Redcar the proportion of deaths at these higher ages is rather more—56%—and in the Urban District of Saltburn and Marske-by-the-Sea still greater, 65%. The difference in these latter is probably due to the larger proportion of old people in their population. The proportion of deaths occurring between the ages of 45 years and 64 is 28%, the percentage over the individual Combined Districts ranging between 23 and 29. The remaining 21% of deaths occurred under the age of 45 years, and are, perhaps, much more to be deplored than the deaths occurring beyond the age of 65, when the normal "three score years and ten" is more or less completed.

In investigating which are the chief causes of death a very different result is obtained if one takes deaths at all ages or if one limits the enquiry to deaths under the age of 45 years: with the former one finds that diseases of the arteries, hæmorrhage into the brain, or heart disease, are together responsible for between one third and one-half of the deaths in this district. Under the age of 45, however, these causes of death are negligible, and first place is now taken by bronchitis, pneumonia and similar respiratory disease, which account for more than one-third of the deaths, while accidents take second place, causing one-fifth of these deaths at younger ages.

The incidence of infectious disease on the district during the year has been light: there were very few cases of measles, whooping-cough or scarlet fever, although this latter disease was more prevalent than in 1942. There were, however, two cases of cerebro-spinal fever, as in the preceding year. Only one case of diphtheria was notified, the lowest number since 1933. Immunisation against this disease has been carried out under the same arrangements as in recent years, but there would still appear to be about one-third of the children in the area unprotected, and if an outbreak occurred it could easily spread among such a considerable proportion.

Children Immunised against Diphtheria.

Number immunised		Guisborough U.D.	Loftus U.D.	Redcar Borough	Saltburn & Marske U.D.	Skelton & Brotton U.D.
at end of 1941	...	737	493	2,235	1,121	1,419
during 1942	...	429	568	607	863	304
during 1943	...	145	223	890	176	410
Total immunised 1935—1943	...	1,311	1,284	3,732	2,160	2,133
Estimated number of these						
now over 14 years of age	...	60	60	180	900	110
Estimated percentage of children under 15 years of age now immunised		69	66	67	98	63

During 1943 only thirteen cases of diphtheria in children under the age of 15 years were notified in the Combined Districts (compared with 33 in 1942), and of these, four children had been immunised, while nine cases occurred among the minority of children who had not been immunised. The one death from diphtheria in the Combined Districts occurred in a non-immunised child. I would repeat what I have stated in previous annual reports, that it has been proved that immunisation lessens by several-fold the risk of the individual child contracting diphtheria, and by still more the risk of a fatal termination if he does contract the illness. The lessened number of cases of diphtheria in 1943 cannot be ascribed definitely to immunisation: the disease naturally recurs in waves and it is probable that now we are in the trough of the waves, affording a good chance for every child to have the benefit of immunisation before the next peak of diphtheria comes along. I should like to point out that, in Saltburn and Marske Urban District, where for some years a very high proportion of the children has been protected by immunisation, there were no cases of diphtheria in children either in 1943 or 1942.

There were no deaths from any form of tuberculosis in the district during the year, but seven new cases were notified, which is a slight increase over the average figure just before the war.

Deaths from Tuberculosis in Combined Districts.

	(2-year periods).							
Deaths from :	1928-9	1930-1	1932-3	1934-5	1936-7	1938-9	1940-41	1942-3
Tuberculosis of lungs :	63	47	42	38	38	44	50	53
Tuberculosis elsewhere :	27	13	17	15	14	11	9	7
Total	90	70 60	59	53	52	55	59	60

The total deaths from tuberculosis occurring in the Combined Districts are seen to fall from 90 in the earliest two-year period to 52 in the period 1936-1937, and thereafter to rise until in 1942-1943 they just surpassed the number ten years earlier. If however the deaths from tuberculosis of the lungs are taken separately from the deaths from tuberculosis in other parts of the body the important point is seen that deaths from tuberculosis apart from that of the lungs have continued their steady decrease, unaffected apparently by the war, and the rise in deaths from tuberculosis since 1937 is due entirely to tuberculosis of the lungs. There is a difference of origin of the two forms of the disease: tuberculosis of the lungs is practically always due to infection from another

human case, while tuberculosis of other parts of the body is in a considerable proportion of cases due to infection from cow's milk. It would seem therefore possible that improvement in tuberculosis of cattle has been maintained during the war, while there have been more deaths from the human form of the disease.

In recent annual reports I have referred to the fact that the last few months of life of the great majority of persons dying from tuberculosis of the lungs are spent in their own homes, where opportunities for spreading the infection are at their greatest. In 1943 in the Combined District 27 persons died from tuberculosis of the lungs: of these, five (18½%) died in institutions: the remainder, in their own homes.

Water-supply: The great majority of the houses in Loftus, as well as all those in Skinnin-grove, Carlin How and North Terrace, are supplied by the Cleveland Water Co.; Cowbar is supplied from the adjoining Whitby Rural District; the remaining villages from estate supplies.

The water-supply generally is soft and pure and there have been no complaints during the year as to quality. In common with other districts Loftus suffered from shortage of water in the autumn of 1943, the Cleveland Water Co.'s storage capacity being almost exhausted by the drought: a restricted intermittent service was maintained and water had to be carried from the lower parts of Loftus by the inhabitants of the higher areas. In ordinary years in the past there has from time to time been a shortage of water in these higher areas, as they are so little below the level of the reservoir that any large draw-off in the lower parts of the supply system prevents any water finding its way up to the highest areas. Elevated water tanks are situated at North Terrace, Seymour Hill and East Loftus, to fill at night and furnish a reserve to be drawn on during the day when the pressure may drop; of late years the supply to these elevated areas has been better than it was some years ago.

The water has not been found to exert any plumbo-solvent action.

According to information furnished by your Surveyor 86% of the houses in the district are supplied directly, 11% from stand pipes, and 3% from wells or springs.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

C. R. GIBSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Guisborough,

26th June, 1944.

Vital Statistics for 1943.

	1943.	1942.	1941.	1940.	1939.
Number of Births	128	119	126	101	131
Number of Deaths	89	93	85	103	88
Infant Mortality Rate ...	47	84	62	10	53½

Notifications received in 1943: Scarlet fever, 13; diphtheria, 1; cerebro-spinal fever, 2; erysipelas, 2; pneumonia, 1; measles, 16; whooping-cough, 4.

Tuberculosis (new cases) in 1943: 3 pulmonary; 4 non-pulmonary.

